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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 40th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 21 July 1994, at 3 p.m.

President : Mr. DANGUE REWAKA (Gabon)
(Vice-President)

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In the absence of Mr. Butler (Australia), Mr. Dangue Rewaka (Gabon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS (continued)

(a) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft decision E/1994/L.22

Ms. CARAVANIDES (Australia), introducing draft decision E/1994/L.22, said that it sought to reflect the level of support for the report of the Commission on Sustainable Development (E/1994/33) and the degree of commitment to the decisions and recommendations taken at its second session expressed during the Council's discussion of the item.

SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: REPORTS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES, CONFERENCES AND RELATED QUESTIONS (continued)

(a) SPECIAL ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

Draft resolution E/1994/1.21

Mr. AWAD (Egypt), introducing draft resolution E/1994/L.21, noted that it was a follow-up to General Assembly decision 48/450. The sponsors of the draft resolution were sure of the Council's desire to cooperate in assisting the reconstruction and development of Lebanon and would like the Council to adopt the draft resolution at the current session.

Ms. MBIMBI (Angola), Mr. MONGBE (Benin), Mrs. KABA (Observer for Côte d'Ivoire) and Mr. RAKOTONDRAMBOA (Madagascar) said that they wished to join the sponsors of draft resolution E/1994/21.

Draft resolution E/1994/L.23

Mr. AWAD (Egypt) introducing draft resolution E/1994/L.23 on behalf of the African Group of States, said that it drew attention to the huge losses suffered by Madagascar as a result of the cyclones and floods that had struck it in 1994 and appealed to all members of the international community to contribute to the task of helping Madagascar.

Mr. SREENIVASAN (India) said that India wished to join the sponsors of draft resolutions E/1994/L.21 and E/1994/L.23.

(k) UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (continued)

Draft decision E/1994/L.19

Mr. KUEHL (United States of America) said that the United States welcomed the heightened interest in membership of the Programme of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as demonstrated by the requests received in that connection from Bangladesh, India and the Russian Federation in 1993. The Executive Committee was the principal international body for advancing mutually agreed-on policies and standards for the protection of refugees throughout the world. It provided guidance to the Office of the High Commissioner and to nations faced with refugee crises and was at the forefront of the international debate on issues such as migration, internally displaced persons and the provision of humanitarian assistance during armed conflict. His Government reaffirmed its commitment to the principles of refugee protection and the responsibility of each State to protect persons with a well-founded fear of persecution, and it welcomed the assistance of the prospective new members.

Draft decision E/1994/L.19 was adopted by consensus.

Mr. SREENIVASAN (India) thanked the Council for agreeing to expand the Executive Committee and those delegations which had expressed their satisfaction at the prospective membership on it of Bangladesh, India and the Russian Federation. India's desire to join the Executive Committee was an expression of its continuing concern for refugee problems and its appreciation of the work of UNHCR. It respected and understood the international obligations relating to refugees which had just been emphasized by the United States representative and would continue to work in support of refugees.

Mr. FITSCHEN (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union and Austria, Norway and Sweden, said that the members of the Executive Committee had an important role to play in insuring the success of the High Commissioner's work. The European Union encouraged those members of the Committee which had not yet done so to accede to the relevant international instruments.

Mr. RAHIM (Bangladesh) thanked the members of the Council for adopting the draft resolution. Bangladesh was host to a large number of refugees and was working closely with UNHCR to facilitate their return to Myanmar.

(e) ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (A/49/38, A/49/204-E/1994/90, A/49/205-E/1994/91; E/1994/68; E/1994/NGO/1)

The PRESIDENT noted that, under the terms of General Assembly resolution 48/111, the Secretary-General's report on the proposed merger of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was to be submitted to the Council through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). In a letter dated 19 July 1994, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee had informed the President that it would not be possible for the Committee to consider the matter in its regularly scheduled session. Accordingly, following consultations with the officers of the Council, he would propose that the issues of the INSTRAW/UNIFEM merger, including the elections to the Board of Trustees of INSTRAW, should be deferred to a resumed session of the Council in September 1994.

It was so decided.

Mr. FITSCHEN (Germany), speaking for the European Union, said that he wished to abide by the decision taken in the light of General Assembly resolution 48/162 not to discuss the question. He would simply draw the attention of delegations to the statement prepared on the question by Germany, on behalf of the European Union, which had been circulated to the Council.

Action on draft proposals

Recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/1994/27)

Ms. FENG Cui (China) said that the Commission's last session had been especially productive, particularly in the attention given to women in third world countries and rural women, and with respect to the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women. As the host country for that Conference, China was making intensive preparations for it, and the Conference had already attracted considerable attention in her country. Her delegation had also been pleased with the results of the Asian and Pacific Regional Preparatory Conference held at Jakarta.

Mrs. KAVA (Observer for Côte d'Ivoire) said that many developing countries were experiencing technical and financial difficulties in preparing the reports referred to in paragraph 6 of resolution 38/10 of the Commission on the Status of Women, and she appealed to the Secretariat to make help available to those countries to finish their reports and to enable them to participate in regional preparatory conferences.

Mr. GULEV (Ukraine) noted that his country had taken part in the regional discussion of the forthcoming Conference and had set up an organizing committee to prepare for its participation in the Conference. He would add that his country was grateful for the help it had been given by the international community in connection with the Chernobyl disaster.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on the three draft resolutions and one draft decision contained in chapter I of the Commission's report (E/1994/27). A statement on programme budget implications of Commission resolution 38/10 could be found in Addendum 1 to the report.

Draft resolution I

Draft resolution I was adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution II

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take a decision on draft resolution II.

Mr. ISSA (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, requested a postponement of the decision so that the language of the resolution could be brought up to date in view of the recent developments in South Africa.

It was so decided.

Draft resolution III

Draft resolution III was adopted

Draft decision under chapter I, section B

The draft decision was adopted.

Mr. VARCHAVER (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) said that the question of the empowerment of women was at the core of IPU's work. There had been little improvement in that area during the last 40 years, and, in fact, the percentage of women parliamentarians in Europe had declined in recent years. IPU had prepared a plan of action stressing parity and partnership between the sexes and underlining the belief that the difference between men and women should not be denied or seen as a limitation but should rather be recognized as an advantage.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take note of the report of the Board of Trustees of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (E/1994/63 and Corr.1) and the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (A/49/38).

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.